

For over 10 years, I have been using an independent ISP, Sonic.net of Santa Rosa, California, for my own consulting business and as the recommended provider for my clients. Sonic has been able to provide services not widely offered by the ILEC-integrated ISP's such as fixed IP addresses for small businesses, fairly effective spam control, and dependable, convenient and rapid customer support that far outshines the phone tree wilderness offered by the telecom giants.

(By contrast, one of my clients who, unfortunately, had to obtain ISP services from an ILEC, has been waiting for over four months to get their carrier-installed router configured correctly!)

It is important for the FCC to realize that independent ISP's such as Sonic.net compete by providing real advantages to their customers, whether businesses or residential consumers. Although the ILEC's might control up to 90% of the DSL service in some markets, certainly 10% competition is better than pure monopoly, and can have the effecting of compelling the ILEC's to make an honest effort to provide new services such as Voip lest the 10% become 20% or more.

It is my strong belief that the FCC should reject this petition from BellSouth because of the extremely negative effect it would have on the ability of independent ISP's to compete in the increasingly important arena of DSL service.

Sincerely,  
Albert T. Schmeder  
Owner, North Coast Software Company  
Windsor, California